

**FILED:** *Leahy*

**RETURN TO**

**RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION**

## Throw It Out!

ALL YOUR LIFE you've been taught that to save is a virtue. Now along comes Emmett J. Leahy of Darien, Conn., with the contrary advice, "Toss it out!" Leahy runs a profitable New York City enterprise founded on this revolutionary creed. More than 100 of the nation's top corporations have called on him and his staff of throw-away specialists to invade their files and warehouses, sort out countless tons of stored records, then discard everything except a tiny fraction of the total. Most of the paper, Leahy says, is just plain junk and should never have been stored in the first place. For one big paper-smothered airline he recently cleaned out 100 tons of the stuff. When sold as wastepaper, it brought the company \$4,500 and released valuable space. He stored many of the company's remaining essential records in his own bombproof warehouse in Whitehouse, N. J.

In 1948 he did an even bigger job for Uncle Sam. The original Hoover Commission hired him to make big dents in the Government's estimated 50,000,000,000 sheets of stored records. Leahy eliminated thousands of tons of it. Often, rummaging through papers in files and on forgotten shelves of government and industry, he has made strange discoveries. These have ranged from corsets and button shoes, circa 1910, to empty beer bottles, false teeth, cans of stale tobacco, and forgotten lunches.

Leahy got started in his unusual work in 1934, when, after graduation from the University of Pittsburgh, he went to work for the National Archives in Washington reviewing records to be disposed of. Later, on a trip to Europe, he found that Europeans, unable to afford the luxury of duplicating machines for making "12 copies of everything" got along just as well. Back home, he started his own anti-paper company, and while serving as a lieutenant commander during World War II, he directed the Navy's first big throw-away program. He says that private industry piles up more useless paper than the Government, and that the average American family is worse than either of them! Most families save everything from Junior's report cards to 2-year-old receipts for water taxes. The most important papers for every family to keep, he says, are: birth certificates, canceled checks that serve as receipts, receipted bills, wills, current insurance contracts, and income-tax returns.



Emmett J. Leahy practices what he preaches in his own warehouse

# America's Interesting People

More than a dozen  
usual personalities  
with their surprising  
abilities:

A cleaner for  
business...

Good and the

Painter with a  
big pin...

Be curious  
ball characters...

Other fascinating  
antics

AUGUST  
1954



## Going to Mars?

Ralph Mentzer and the space clock he built. Large dial shows time on Mars; lower dial, Greenwich time, Earth. Dial on left indicates Martian day, month, and year; right dial, same for Earth

**BEFORE YOU GET READY** to zoom off to Mars in a space ship, better see Ralph Mentzer of New Holland, Pa. Ralph, a mechanical engineer, recently completed an out-of-this-world space clock which his firm, the Hamilton Watch Co. of Lancaster, presented to the Fels Planetarium of Philadelphia. This fabulous timepiece would come in mighty handy up there on Mars, where time runs a lot different from ours. Your own watch, Ralph explains, wouldn't be much good to you. When it's lunchtime by Earth time, it may be bedtime for the Martians or time to get up, depending on what part of the planet you happened to be camping out on. And it wouldn't do any good to set your watch, for a Martian day

Earth day. By tomorrow you'd be missing all your Martian appointments again.

Ralph, often working until 1 or 2 A.M.—Earth time, that is—built the novel clock in 10 weeks. Its face simultaneously shows Mars time, Earth time, and the month, day, and year on both planets. Since Mars is more than 48,000,000 miles farther away than Earth from the Sun, Ralph points out, a year on Earth is only slightly more than half a year on Mars. He figures that, by Martian time, he'd now be 20 years old instead of 39, and says, "Maybe our little brother planet is where the Fountain of Youth is really located." As for vacations, he anticipates the day when he can spend his usual two-week holiday on Mars, where it will be stretched to four weeks.

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